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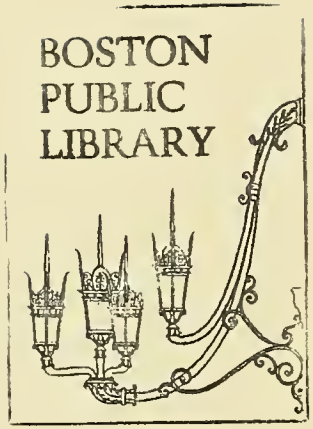

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Commercial Design Guidelines for Lower Mills

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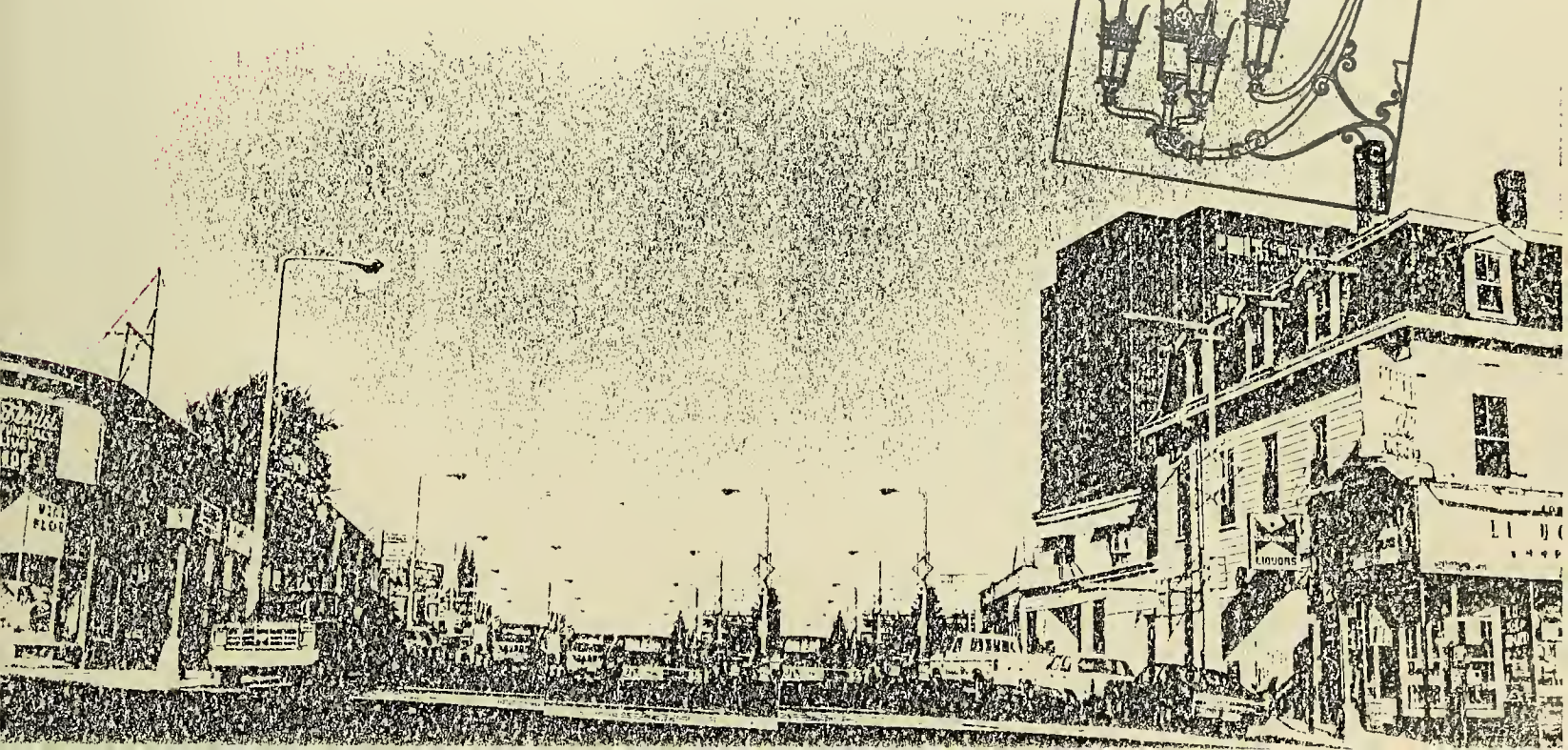


(Circa 1980 ?)

a Commercial

Sec. 6 Eligible Expenditures

A. Storefront improvements. Such improvements are mandatory for participation in the rebate part of the program, as rebates for all other types of expenditures are dependent on satisfactory completion of this item.

B. Architectural, design, landscape and site design, and engineering costs for eligible improvements.

C. Exterior repairs on all sides and all floors of the property.

D. Interior repairs and construction of permanent fixtures to floors used for commercial purposes.

E. Site improvements related to commercial use, including walks, plazas, landscaping, and parking. Parking for the exclusive use of the business is an eligible improvement either on the subject property or in reasonable walking distance and within 300 feet of the Project Area.

F. Improvements to mechanical systems, including elevators, electrical, plumbing, heating ventilation and air conditioning, with the exception that there will be a 10% rebate on improvements to heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

G. Structural repairs.

H. Construction of new buildings, provided they are to be occupied solely by one or more eligible businesses.

I. All improvements must be consistent with applicable city codes and ordinances. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain necessary building permits and public agency approvals.

J. Only improvements included in plans approved by the Office of Program Development prior to the commencement of construction are eligible for a rebate.

REVITALIZATION Program

Sec. 1 Types of Assistance

Rebates -- Within designated project areas, a rebate will be paid to businesses and property owners who make improvements to commercial property. Rebates will be paid at the completion of work and after approval of work by program personnel.

Lending Assistance -- Program staff will assist applicants, at their request, in assembling necessary financial and project documents for presentation to banks and other prospective lenders. Businesses and property owners within Project Areas designated under this program will have priority access to loan assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration, in the form of loan guarantees and direct loans.

Architectural Assistance -- Applicants are also eligible to receive limited free, professional architectural design services in connection with approved projects.

Sec. 2 Project Areas

Improvements must be made to commercial property in the following project areas: Fields Corner, Uphams Corner, Lower Mills, Codman Square, Dorchester Avenue at Savin Hill, Centre Street (Jamaica Plain), Hyde Square, Brigham Circle, and the West Fens. For precise boundaries of Project Areas see Figures 1 through 9.

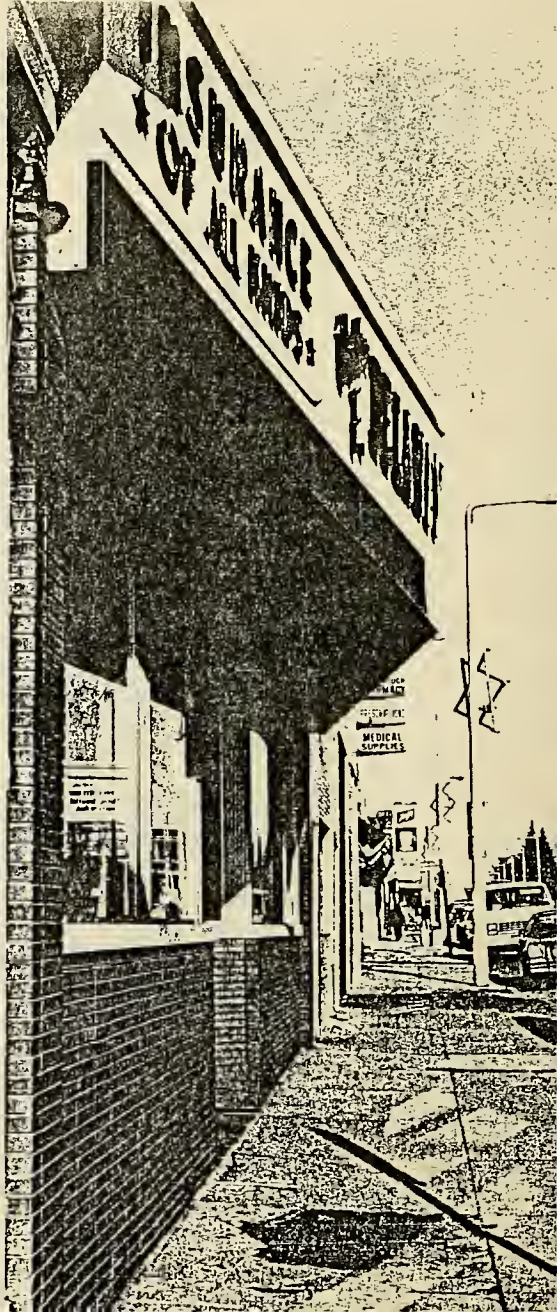
A limited amount of rebate, loan and architectural assistance is available to businesses located outside designated target areas in Dorchester and Jamaica Plain, on a first come-first serve basis.

Sec. 3 Definition of a Project

For purposes of this program a project is defined as a storefront (a ground floor space with sidewalk frontage occupied--or designed for occupancy--by a single commercial establishment) plus any interior space directly above within the same structure. The building exterior and grounds are also included within the project definition.

APPROACHES

There are several approaches to commercial revitalization and facade improvements. These approaches can be characterized by four levels of involvement: removal, repair and maintenance, renovation and reconstruction, and new (infill) construction. These levels of effort are part of an overall strategy for improvements and should be thought of as an additive process -- each playing an important part of the complete effort, and each building upon the results of what has been done previously.



Removal

1.1 Removal is an approach that is an easy process to complete and one which will have a significant effect. Merchants taking part in the Commercial Revitalization Program must, when applicable to their building, make the following removal efforts:

1.2 - the removal and dismantling of old, unused sign brackets, frames and hardware on the roof, cornice and front wall of the building. Along with this "unbolting", any resulting holes and damage to the building must be repaired.

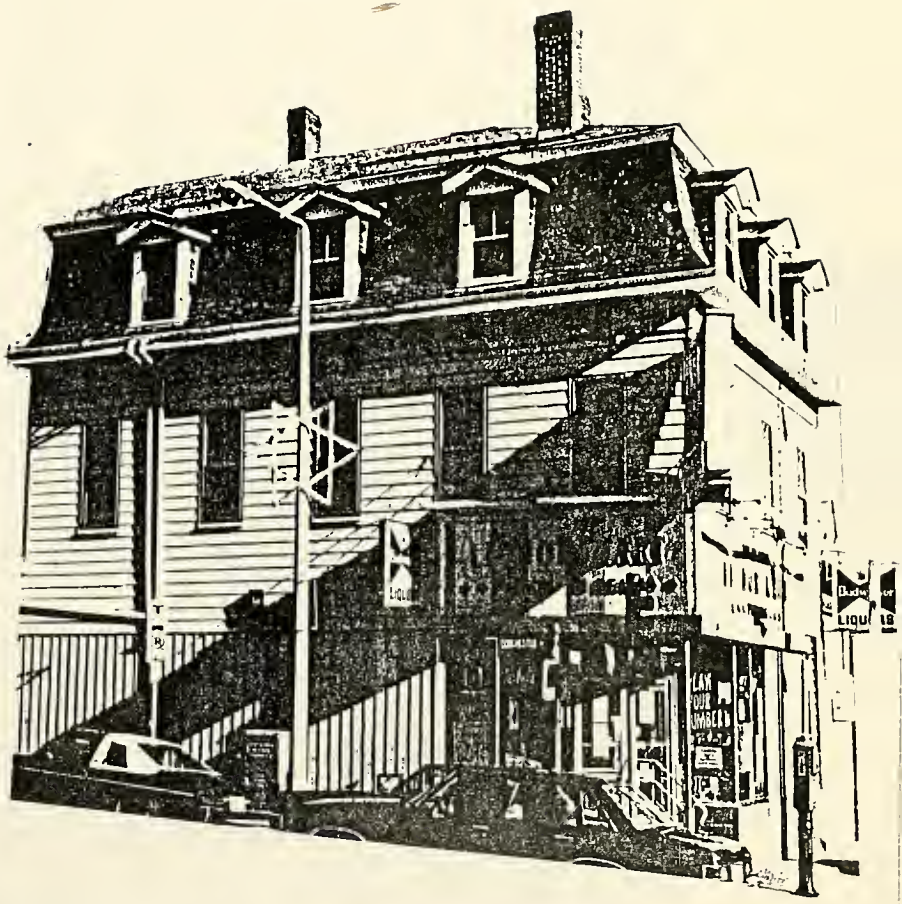
1.3 - the removal of false front, siding, and non-conforming signs and advertising from the facade of the building. This includes formstone, fascia panels, aluminum siding, metal panels, mansard roofs, and any other attachments that cover and disrupt the original detailing and materials of the building.

1.4 - the removal, dismantling, and painting over of signs which, through a change of tenants or merchandising, are no longer relevant to the store.

Repair & Maintenance

2.1 Repair and maintenance are two procedures that have an important effect on the overall visual quality of the street, and are efforts that should be part of a proprietor's yearly routine, but are often neglected. By continually servicing and maintaining a facade, storefront, or sign, storeowners can avoid major expenses later. Repainting and refinishing woodwork, signs and trim, cleaning signs and replacing electric bulbs, patching concrete and brickwork, and simply cleaning the facade and windows, are a few of the tasks that must be part of an ongoing process.

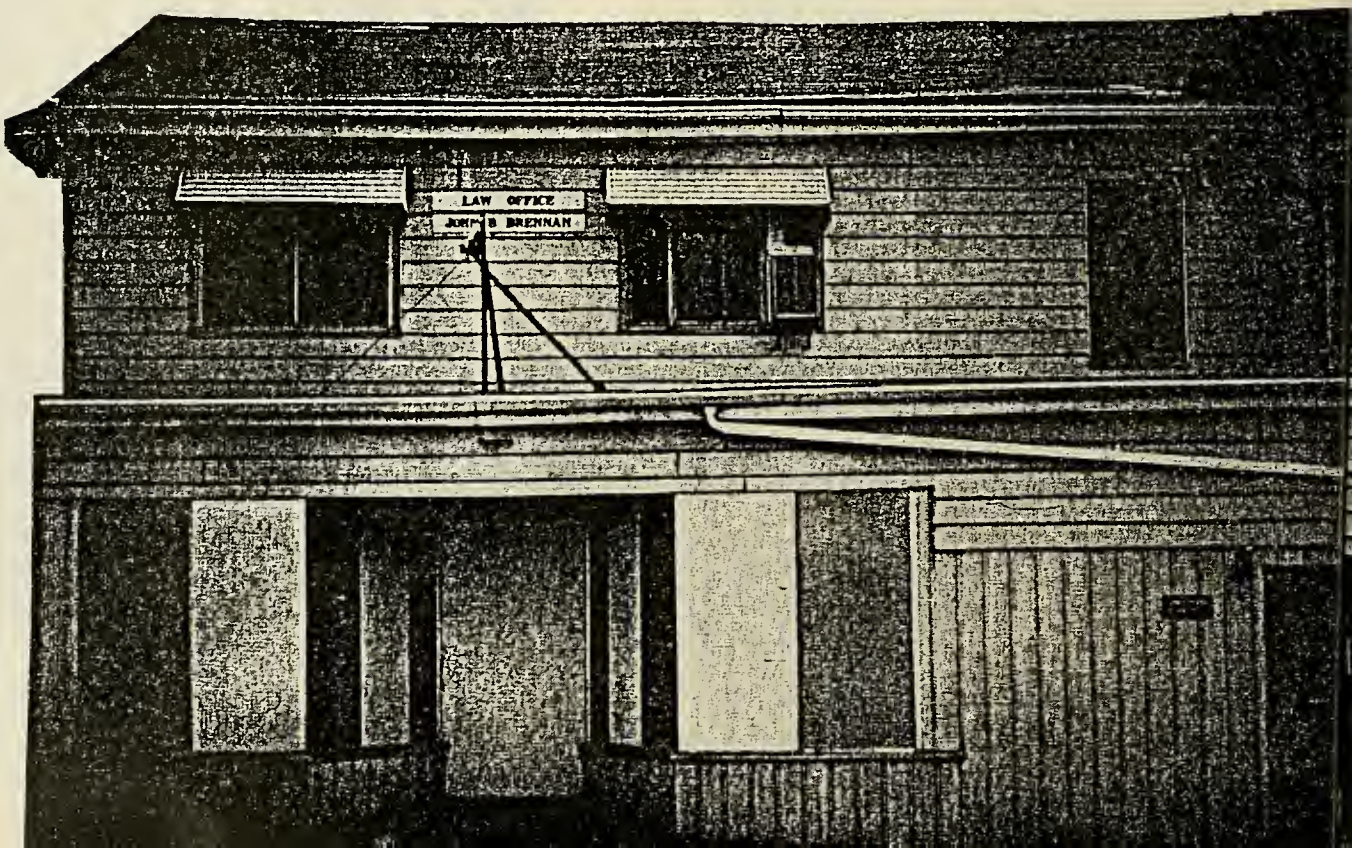
2.2 Any storeowner or tenant taking part in the Program, in addition to working on neglected maintenance procedures, must also repair and replace damaged building components that have resulted from excessive and extreme weathering. This includes replacing missing and damaged building details, repairing and repainting of brickwork, and the patching and sealing of concrete and stone work. In addition, either the cleaning or painting of building facades should be considered.



When a new tenant or merchant moves into an existing building or when an existing store wants to redesign and replace their storefront the process is one of renovation and reconstruction. A new design must be developed for the new use which will fit into the existing building structure.

- new storefronts should fit within the building frame as formed by columns, piers and cornices.
- architectural detailing must not be destroyed or covered
- materials should work with the existing building materials
- new storefronts must relate to upper levels
- a consistent location for signs must be used.

In addition to respecting these design guidelines, appropriate removal and repair procedures must be undertaken during the renovation and reconstruction of storefronts.



Renovation & Reconstruction

New Construction

4.1 There are cases in which a gap occurs in the streetscape. This break is particularly felt as one moves along the sidewalk. This opening usually results from the removal of a building that once matched the line of shapes on the street. If new construction respects its street context, the block will be strengthened and the scale of the sidewalk experience is restored.

4.2 The following general guidelines for new construction must be followed:

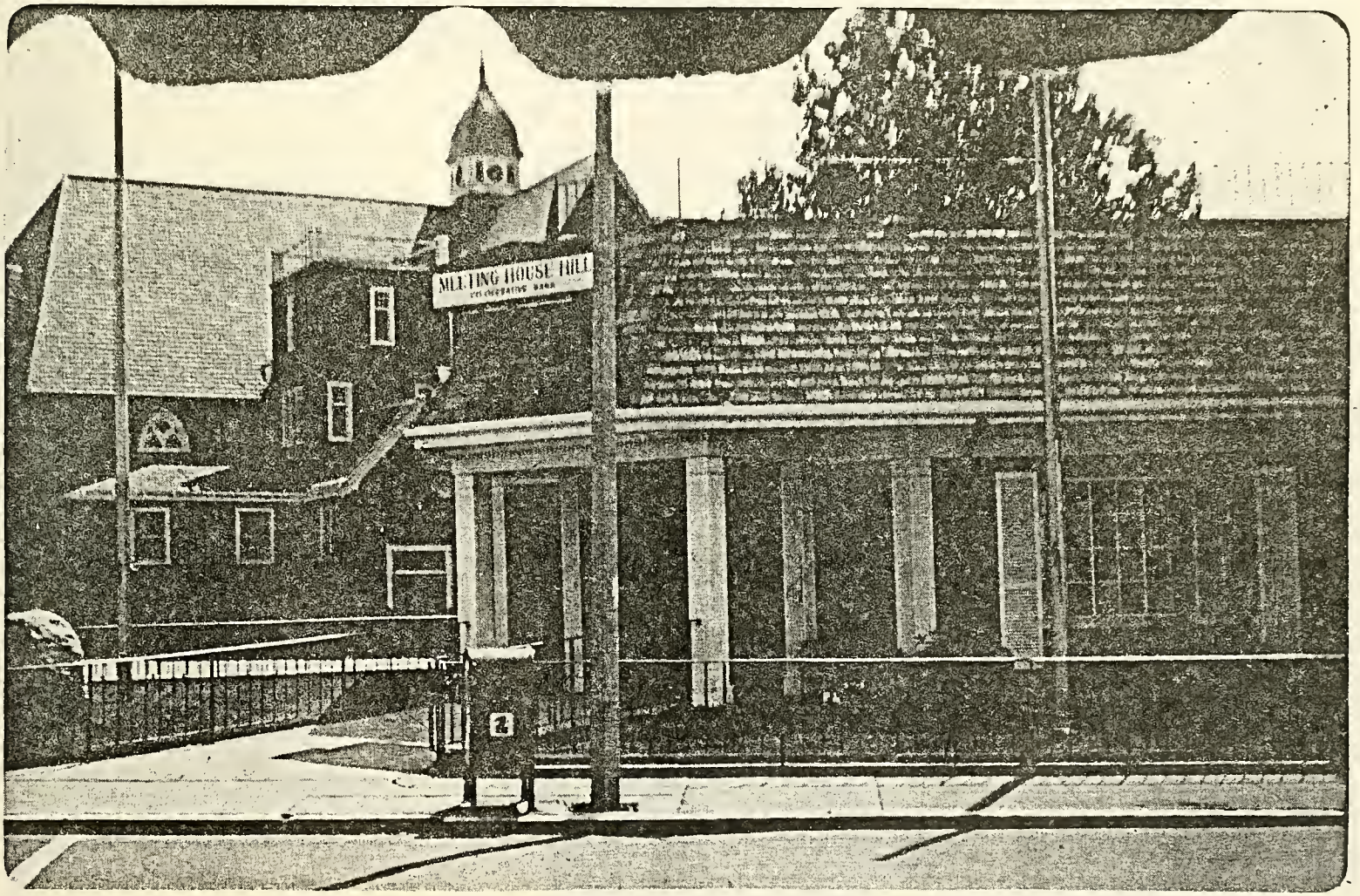
4.3 - new construction should be a product of its own time and not a copy of an older architectural style.

4.4 - the massing of a new building must maintain the existing wall line of the street facade

4.5 .- the cornice line of existing buildings should be maintained or, at a minimum, incorporated in the new design

4.6 - entire blocks are to be considered as almost a single facade - materials, colors, rhythm of elements, and common details must be recognized.

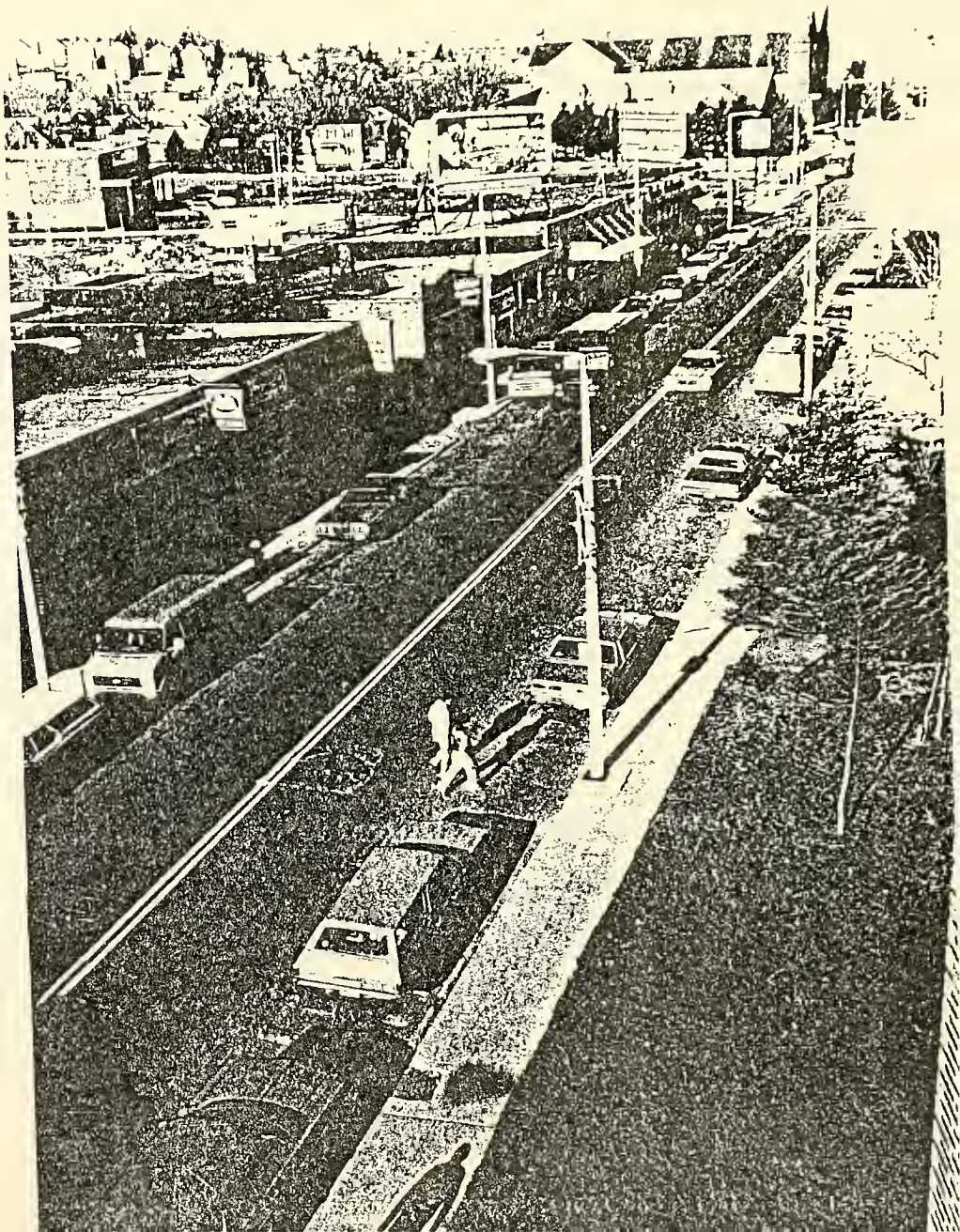
4.7 The design and construction of new buildings is a complex process, involving many considerations. Due to the importance of new infill construction, the services and advice of a professional designer and the involvement of the Design Review Panel are of prime importance.


MEETING HOUSE HILL

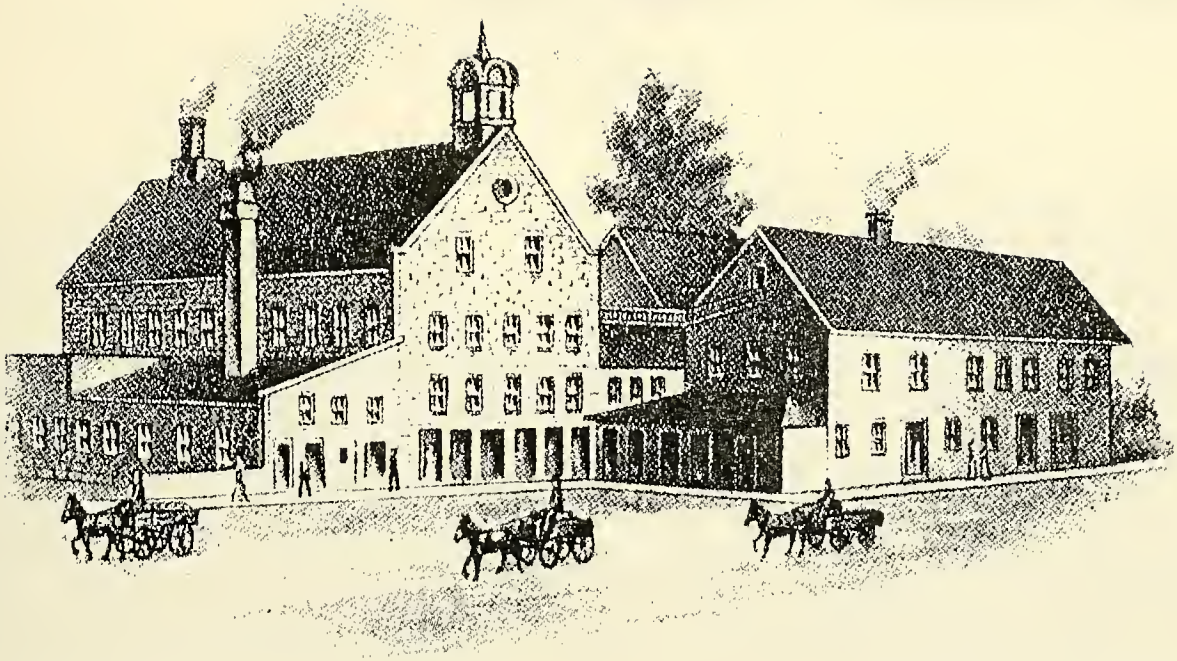
Design Context
NEIGHBORHOOD

Because it was a center of industry from very early times and located at a node on the path between Boston and its suburbs, Lower Mills has long been one of the most populous sections of Dorchester. The majority of housing units are single and two family structures which are increasingly being purchased by young middle income families. The area has an almost rural character because of the large open spaces provided by Dorchester and Walsh Parks and the Neponset River Reservation.

In addition to providing the eighborhood's shopping center and ommercial services, Lower Mills ffers many institutional uses: a oston Public Library branch on ichmond Street, many churches, welfare office in the old Mills dministration Building, a community enter on Dorchester Avenue. And its ore unique import is that of providing ork and jobs to the region by the ight manufacturing use currently ccupying the half million square eet of building space in the Mill omplex.



HISTORIC
Design Context



From a drawing *Kindness of H. C. Gallagher*

OLD STONE MILL OF WALTER BAKER & CO., ERECTED IN 1849 AT DORCHESTER LOWER MILLS, MASSACHUSETTS

This building was on the site of the original mill, part of which was used in 1765 by John Hannon (present site of Baker Mill and Refrigerating Plant).

Individual Storefront

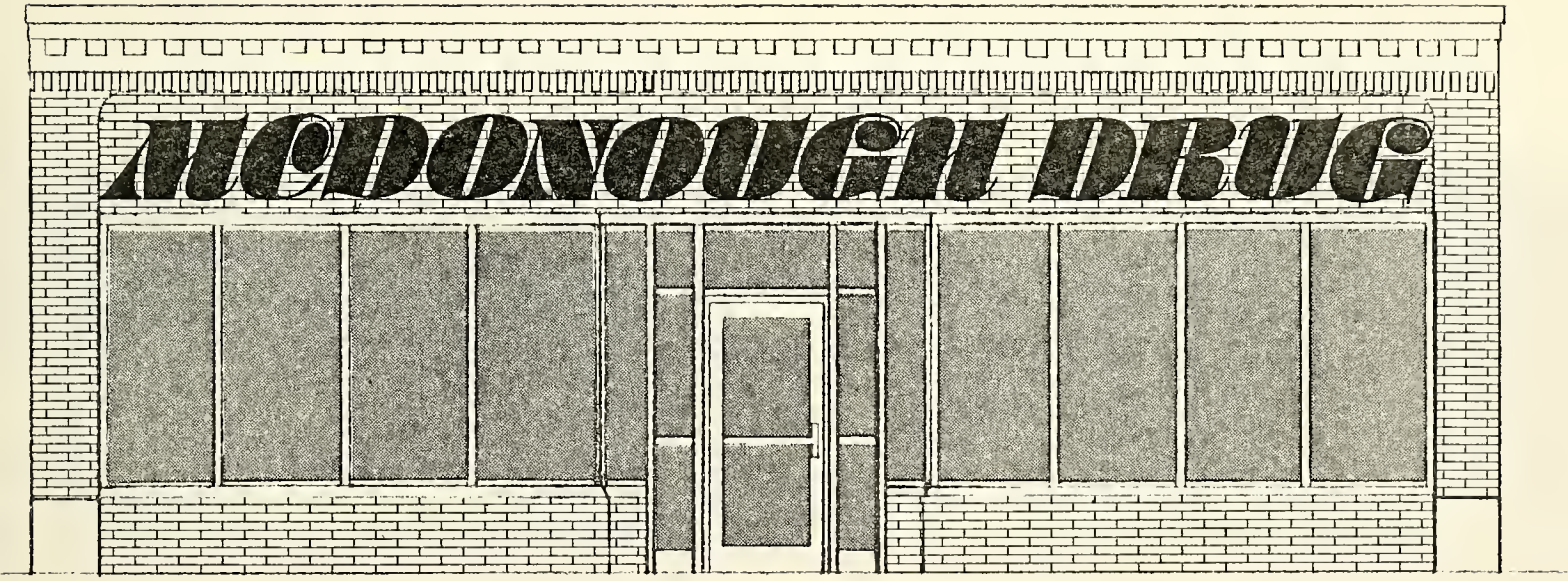
The unique visual identity of the shopping district is based on a unity of design, it cannot be achieved where there is a chaos of discordant building elements and signs. On the other hand, unity should not lead to a sterile sameness of all the buildings. Unity is derived from a simple set of underlying systems that bind buildings together into a larger composition. Within this, there is room for variety and accent. The foundation of this set of ordering systems is the individual building facade.

The assets of the existing facade should be used to the greatest advantage. The design must integrate the pieces of the facade into a strong composition. The best approach is to remove conflicting attachments and modifications and to reinforce the original style of the building. Successive remodelings of some structures will have added layers of material to the facade. These sheathings should be removed.

- Respect the basic form of the building. The form or shape of the building is the background for the details of the facade. These details include windows, shope entrances, or special decorations. Relate ground floors to upper floors by aligning openings on the first floor with the second floor windows.

- Use original materials when possible, or select new materials that are compatible with the existing ones. Much of the visual interest and character of a building is expressed in the original materials.

- Use proportion that are compatible. Specific proportions are repeated frequently along the street and give a sense of familiarity and order to many of the individual buildings. Facade improvements should respect these proportions. Avoid mixing styles of differing proportions within the same facade.


McDONOUGH DRUG

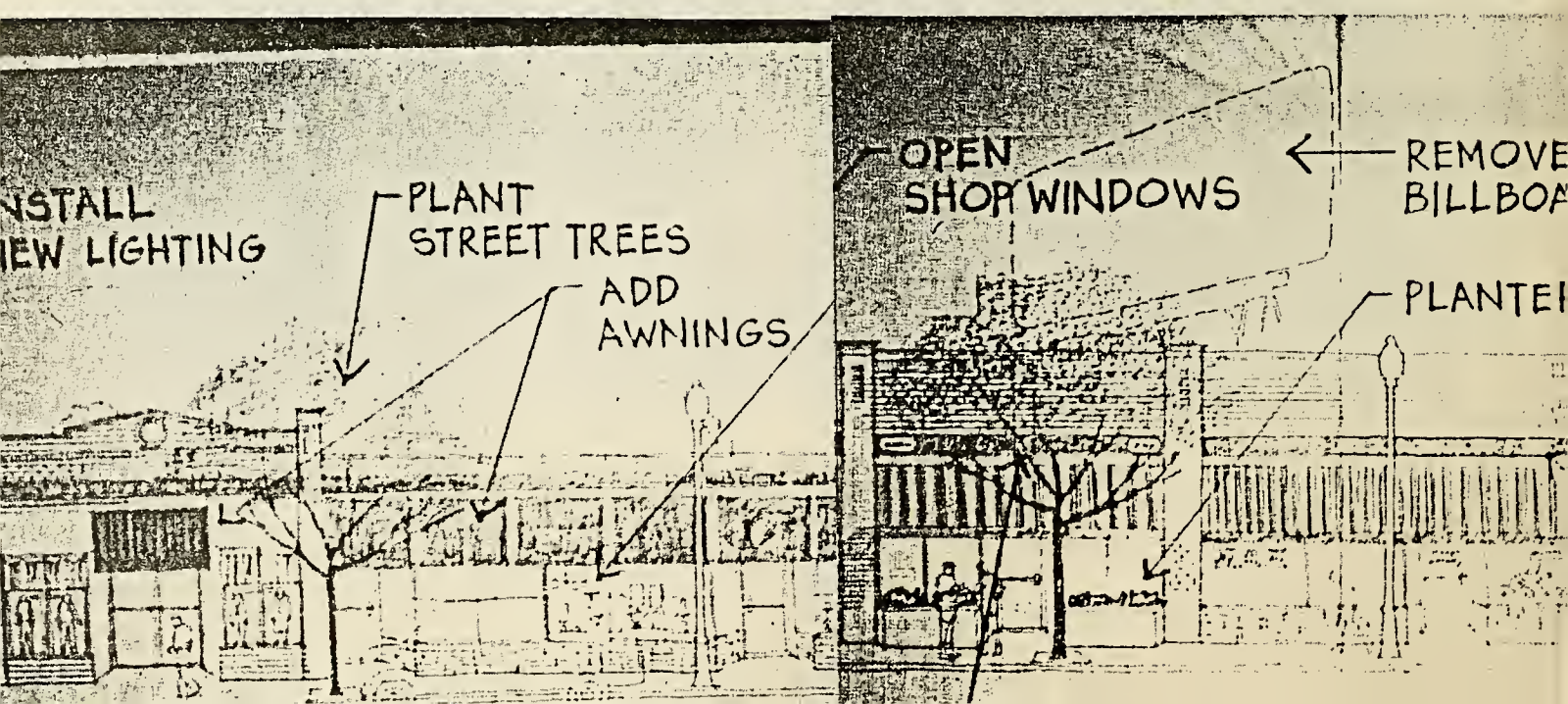
Block Facade

Just as a single facade should be designed to create a unified image, so should entire blocks be designed to establish a sense of continuity on the street.

Commercial streets have the standard components of an urban environment: rows of buildings on both sides of the street, sidewalks, traffic and parking lanes, and a scattering of street furnishings. The most commanding portion of the scene is the block of commercial structures. They form a wall - an edge - that defines the limits of the street. That wall is a

In contrast to facade design, block design takes into consideration the entire street and the surrounding area. It is concerned with the relationship of each building's facade to the others.

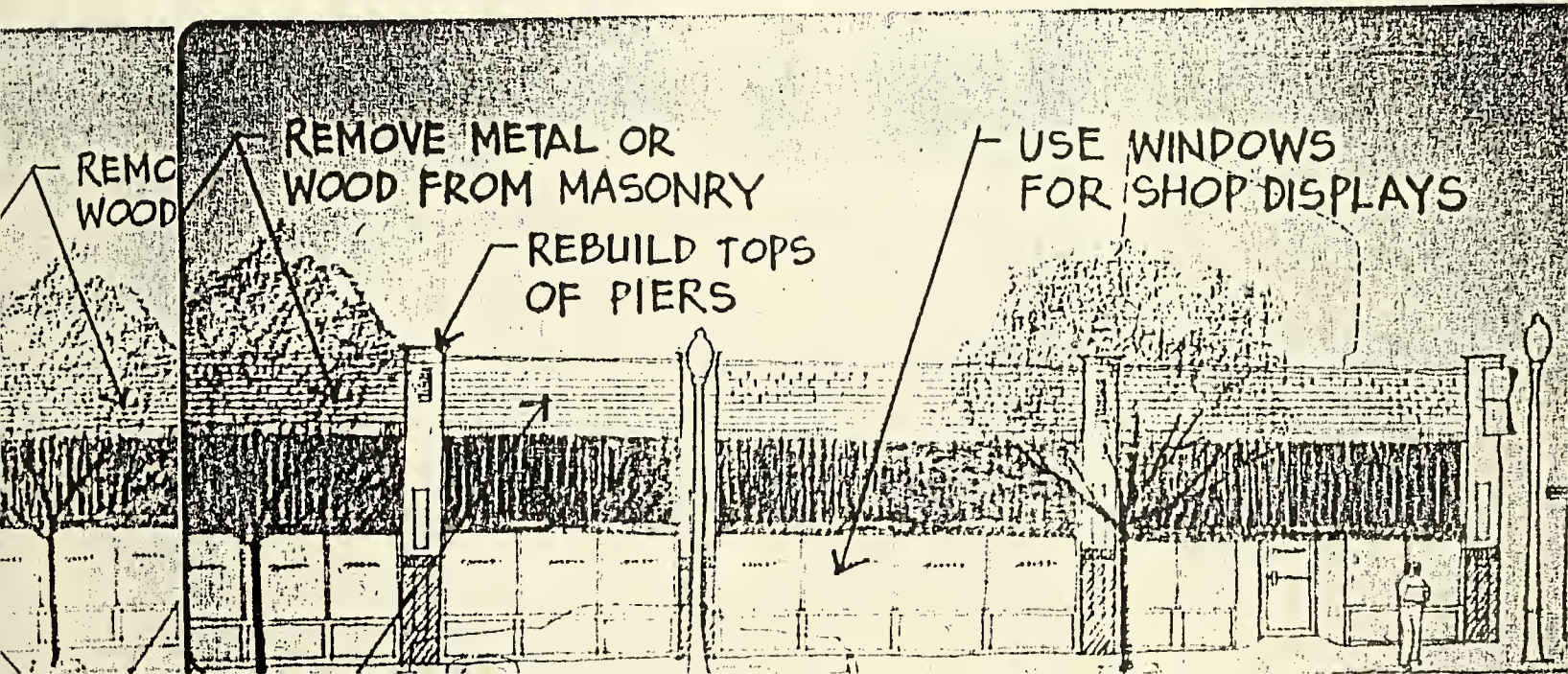
composite of solids and voids, of structure and opening. There is a pattern of windows and doors on the street, and the strength of the visual continuity of the street is increased or diminished by the strength of this pattern. It is possible to maintain the identity of each building and business while reinforcing this continuity.



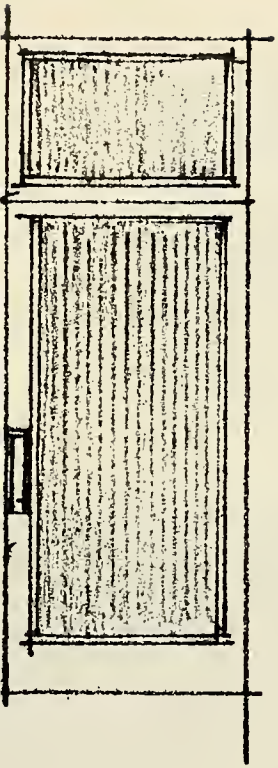
- Respect the proportions of existing facades. New construction and facade renovations must fit within the building frame and repeat the rhythms that already exist in the facade windows and openings.

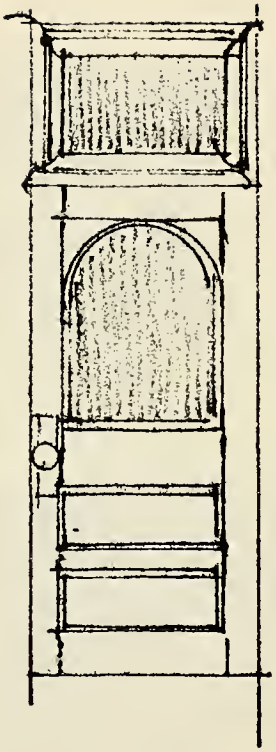
- Use materials already employed in the block. Brick and concrete as well as wood, marble and concrete block establish the vocabulary of building materials.

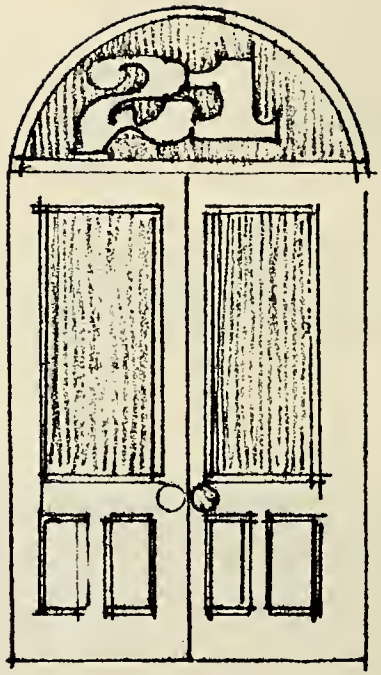
- Mount signs to establish lines along the block; signs should be positioned on building faces so that they align with others in the block. When a natural sign band exists on a building facade (such as those created by cornices above storefronts) this must be the primary determinant of sign position, even when this band does not align with others in the block.

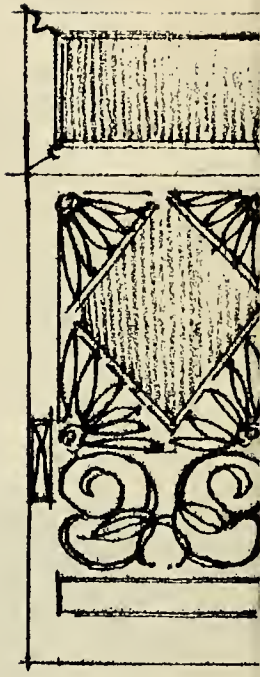


DOORS

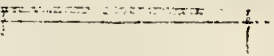


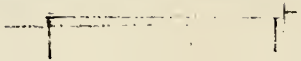


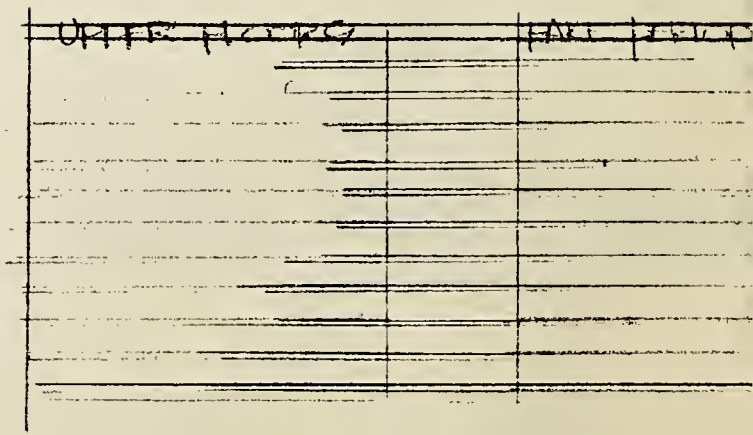


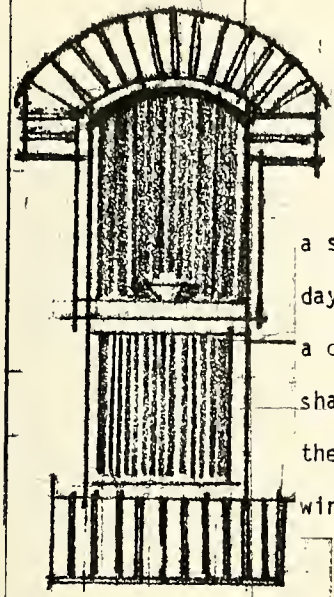


Doors can be a part of the overall metal curtain
the doors and windows or they can be treated as a separa
individual construction. When they are made to stand
entry capacity, the design should compliment and blend
of the structure of another time. Doors leading to the
of a building and service doors should be more modest.



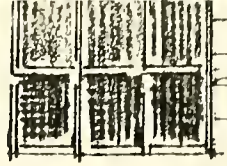


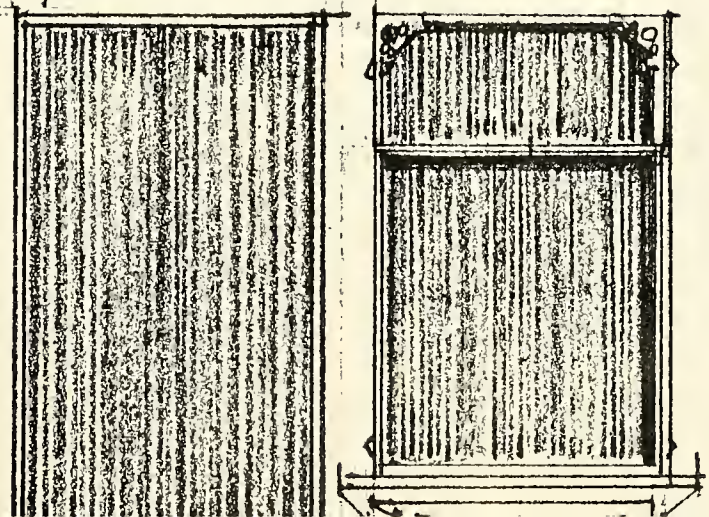


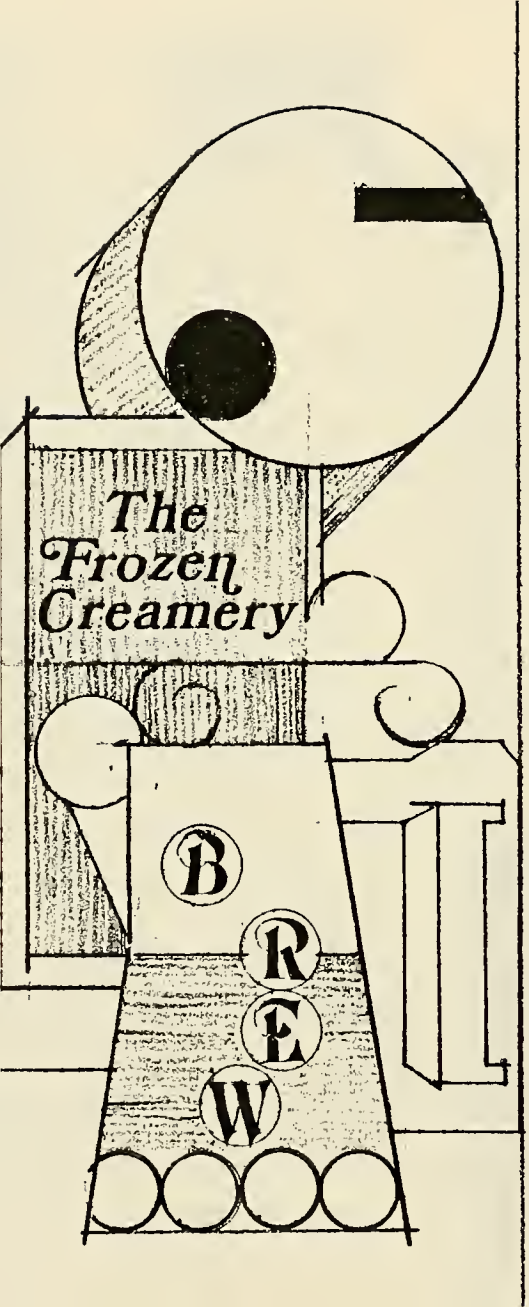


WINDOWS

Quite often the windows are one of the mor important elements of a store arcade and their purpose is more than the usual one of admittin daylight to the interior but quite often offer an introduction or even a direct view to the products and services offered within. The size, shape, position and texture of the glass can symbolize and connotate the type of establishment within. Besides offering a view or display, windows can serve as lighting and [illegible].







The signs of a store can function as identification, provide informa and convey an image to the public. They can do this with words, objects, or any combination of these. They can be placed horizontally, c vertically. on the facade, project at an angle to it, or be a totally freestanding equipment. Some of the more important things to remember about signs.

1. Keep the message short and simple; little conveys more to a passerby whether he be walking or driving.
2. Don't try to catch the viewer's eye with size. Keep size down and in scale with other buildings and street.
3. Maintain good craftsmanship and construction. Avoid sloppy and unprofessional signs and letters.
4. Is the sign placed in the appropriate place. Quite often the commercial structure will indicate the position of signage in a more horizontal band on the first story lintel.
5. Are the sign materials, letter type and lighting appropriate to the shopping center's architecture?
6. Does the sign convey an image of the product or service to be sold. Is it imaginative, catching and unique?

- signs may include only the street number, the name and kinds of business, service or facility conducted on the premises, the year the business was established, a slogan, the hours of operation, time and temperature, and lettering that is part of a trademark.

- trademarks are limited to no more than 25% of the area of a sign face.

- any lighting must be continuous, no flashing or blinking lights are permitted

- all signs must be stationary

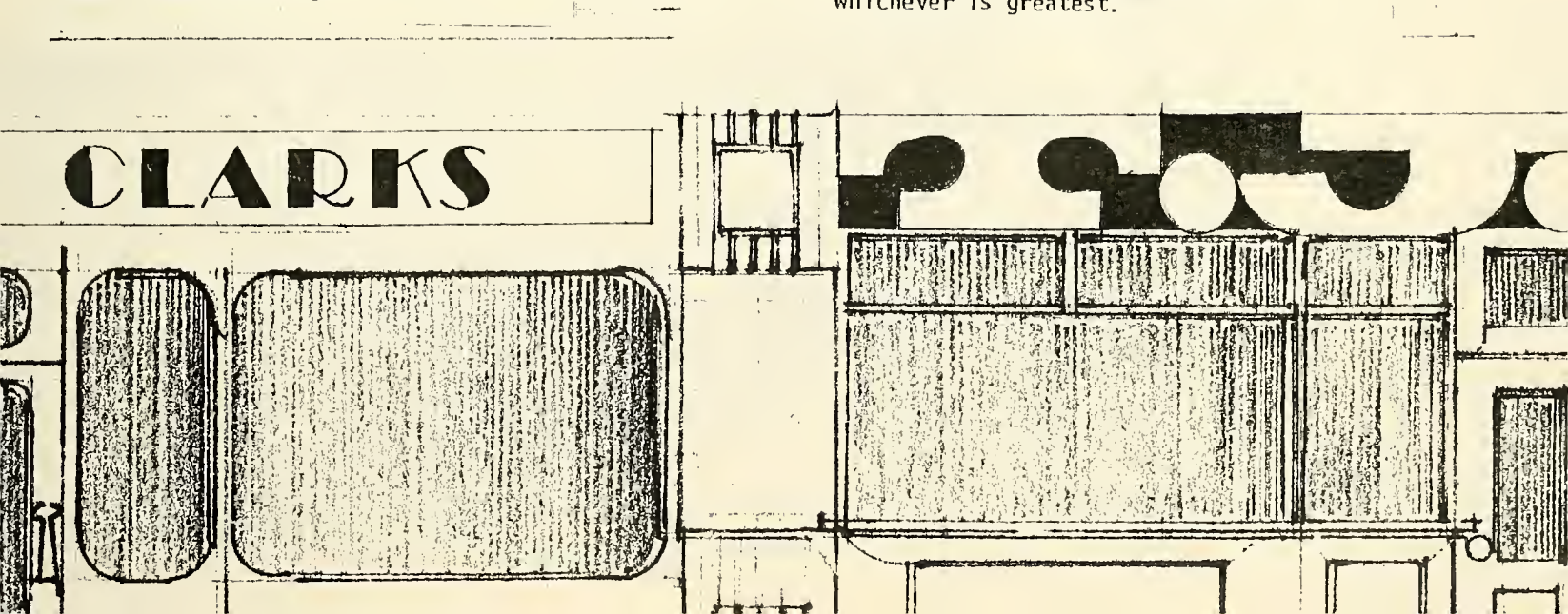
- no signs may extend above the cornice line of the building

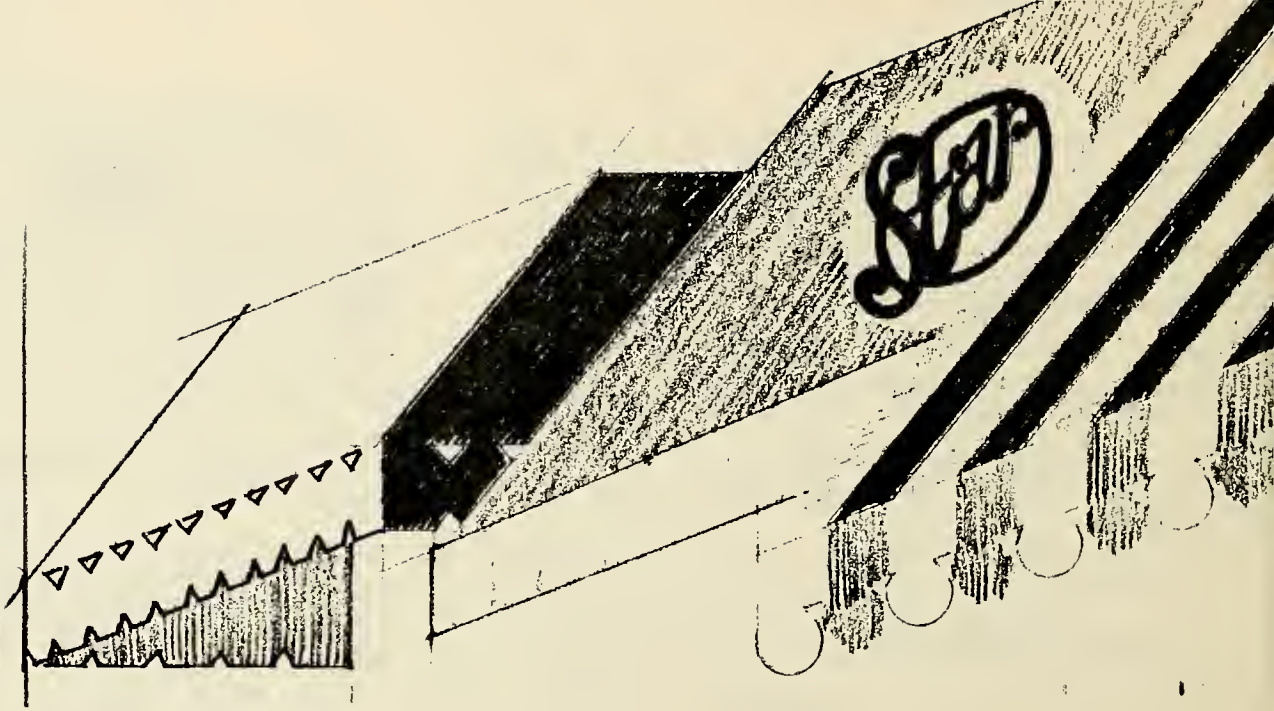
- signs attached parallel to a building can project no more than 15 inches from the building surface.

- the top of any sign can be no higher than either 25 feet above grade, the top of sills of the first level of windows above the first story, the lowest point of the roof, or the top of the parapet of one story buildings, whichever is lowest.

- permanent signs on the inside of a window cannot exceed 30% of the total glass area.

- the total area of all signs cannot exceed either 50 square feet or the length of the building's street frontage multiplied by 2 square feet, whichever is greatest.



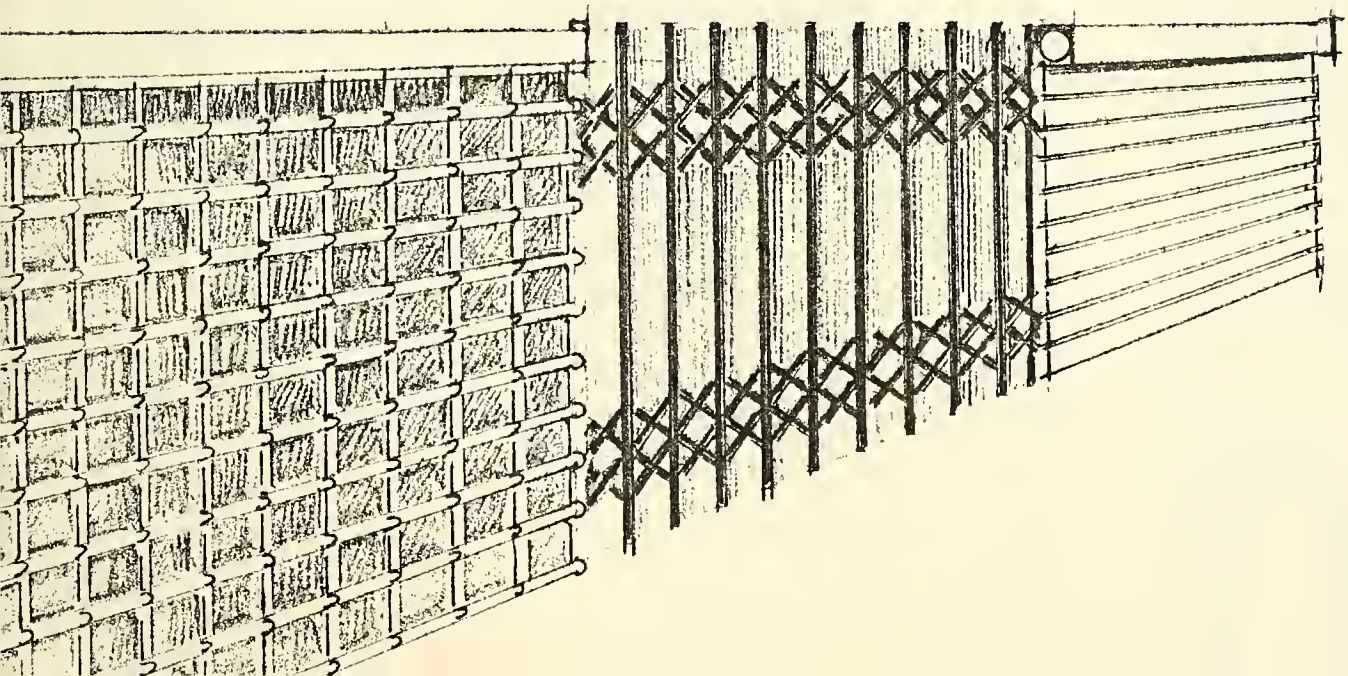


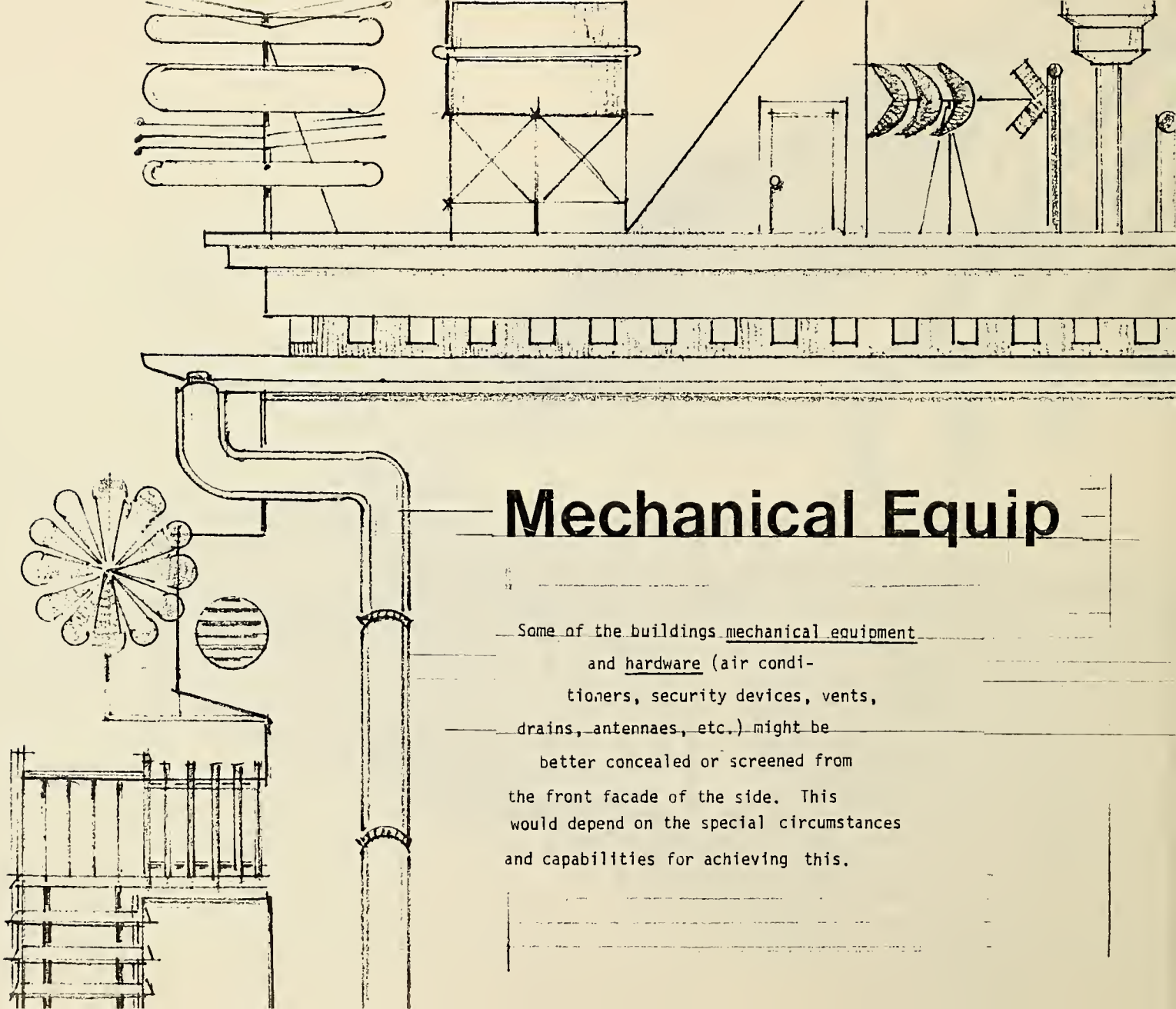
Awnings

Awnings on a store front can protect the merchandise in the window from direct sunlight and offer shelter to pedestrians from rain or snow. Besides the utilitarian functions the canopy can create a pedestrian environment in which shoppers can be enticed to stop, look and step inside. When choosing awnings be sure that they are adaptable to season changes and resistant to inclement weather. They should enhance and compliment the architectural style and scale of the building and way perform the additional functions of displaying signage and identification.

Security

Security guards can roll down from the top or retract from the si There are solid and open mesh varieties. If conditions and financing permit, a flexible and transparent variety is preferable as it permits light and displays to enhance the nitetime environment. Many new locks and alarm systems have appeared on the markets and are available to the storeowned with a percentage rebate of their cost.

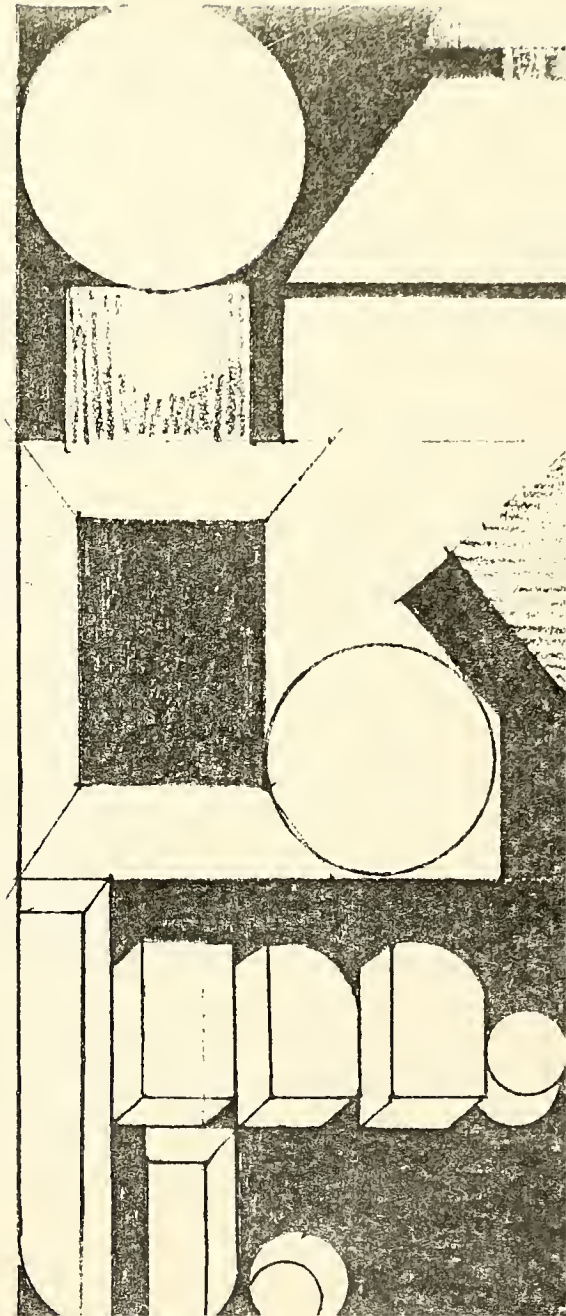


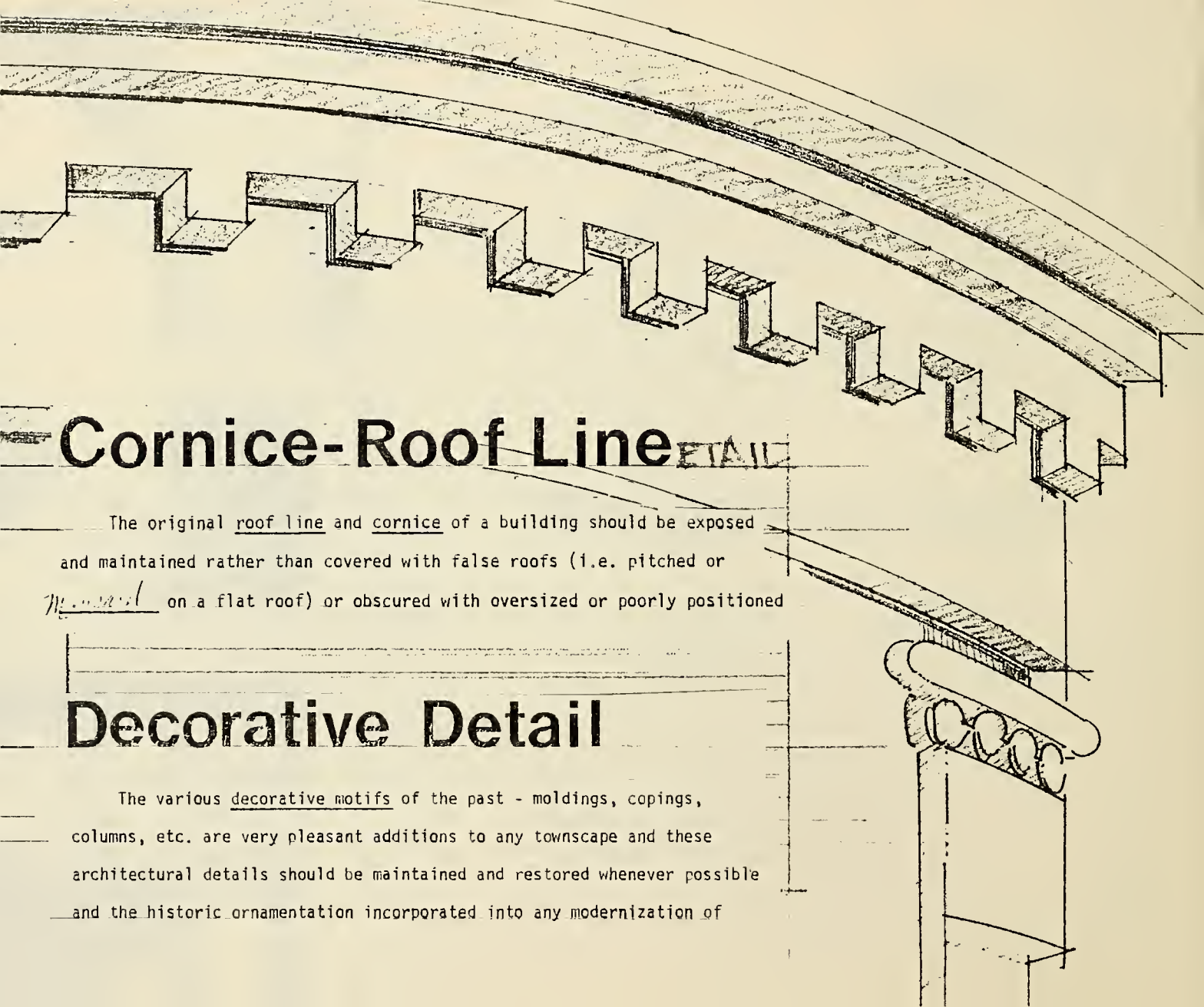


Mechanical Equip

Some of the buildings mechanical equipment and hardware (air conditioners, security devices, vents, drains, antennaes, etc.) might be better concealed or screened from the front facade of the side. This would depend on the special circumstances and capabilities for achieving this.

LIGHTING





Cornice-Roof Line

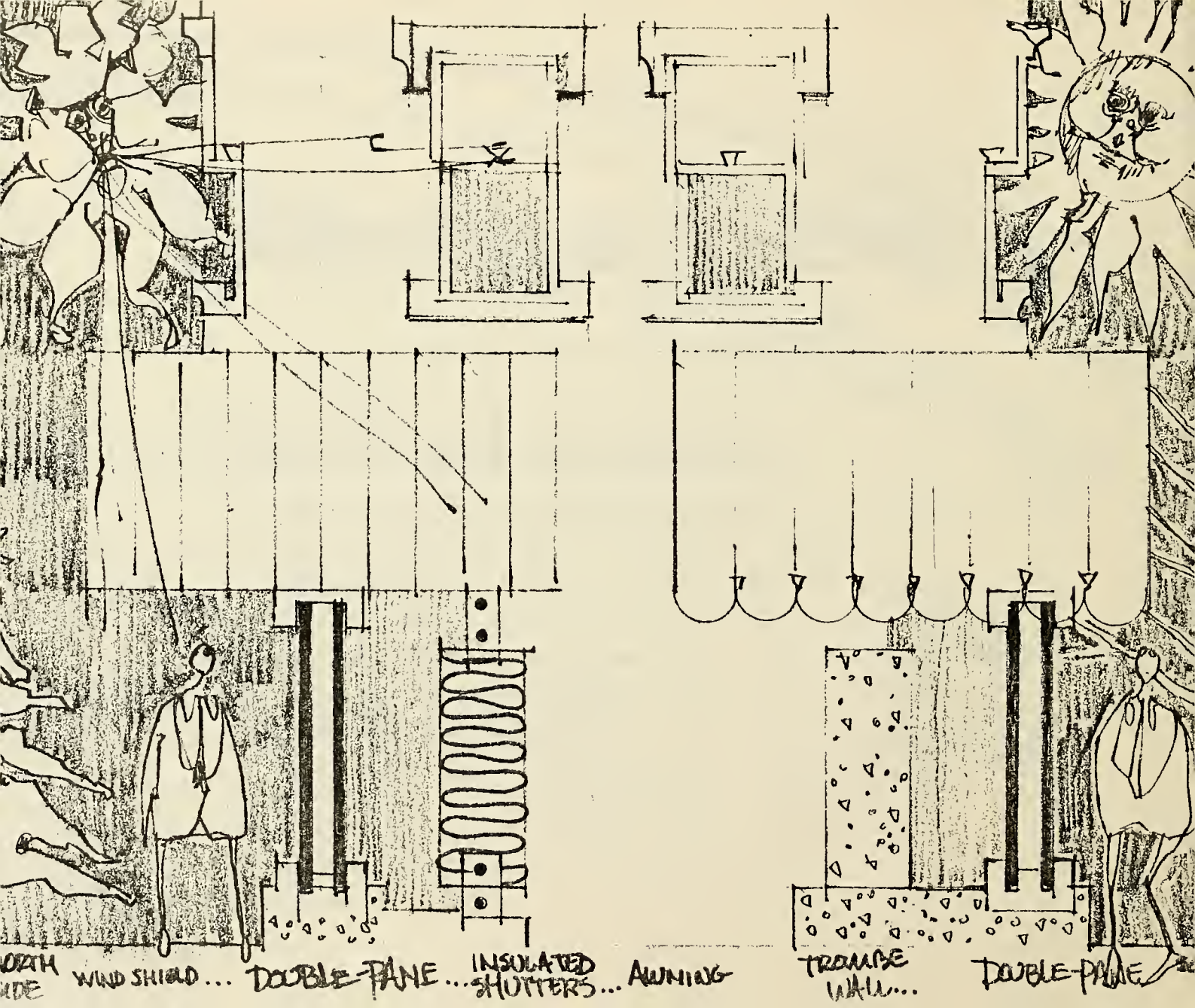
The original roof line and cornice of a building should be exposed and maintained rather than covered with false roofs (i.e. pitched or mansard on a flat roof) or obscured with oversized or poorly positioned

Decorative Detail

The various decorative motifs of the past - moldings, copings, columns, etc. are very pleasant additions to any townscape and these architectural details should be maintained and restored whenever possible and the historic ornamentation incorporated into any modernization of

ENERGY Conservation

The current energy crunch and intense desire to cut down on heat loss can often present a conflict with the attempt to open up a store to customers and pedestrians. The very presence of large areas of glazing at the first floor level is usually associated with retail and commercial activity. Rather than boarding or blocking up window area one can cut down on the problem with thicker glass or with layers of glass. The front windows might be done with insulating glass or double glazing while the backs or display windows might be completely enclosed with sliding windows. Perhaps operable blinds or shutters could provide protection through the coldest parts of the year or day. One should also remember too that with passive solar heating it is an advantage to have glazing towards the southern exposure of the building. Air locks at entrances and exits might be looked into.


NORTH SIDE
WIND SHIELD...
DOUBLE-PANE...
INSULATED SHUTTERS...
AWNING
TROMBE WALL...
DOUBLE-PANE

The roof might present the most significant heat loss of the one story commercial structure. Many fiberglass and stropdam products are available for installing behind the ceiling pavers or underneath the roofing surface and can even be purchased as an integral part of these items. Decorating exterior walls often provide an easy chance to stable in some rows of blanket insulation; or if all these walls are permanent one can possibly have some foam or cellulose blown in.

The efficiency of the present heating system should be checked and possibly upgraded or modified. With the flat roofs found on many commercial structures an owner has an ideal location for installing solar collectors.

PROCEDURES

F. Completed architectural drawings, along with a photograph of the property and construction plans, are filed with the Office of Program Development (OPD). If the plans are approved, a letter (two copies) is sent by OPD to the applicant authorizing a rebate at the completion of work and upon presentation of valid receipts for labor and materials. If the applicant accepts the terms and conditions outlined in the letter, he signs and returns one copy of the letter to OPD.

G. If required by applicant, Financing Package is prepared for submission to prospective sources of financing. General loan packaging and financial advisory assistance will be provided the applicant; however, the cost of any additional services such as audits, accounting and legal advice is the responsibility of the applicant.

H. The project is constructed. The availability of loan monies during the course of work will be in accordance with terms and conditions agreed upon by the applicant and the lender(s). Rebate will be paid to the applicant and/or the lender, as agreed, after inspection of the completed construction work by a program rehabilitation specialist, upon approval in accordance with submitted plans, and upon approval of submitted receipts.

A. Either directly, or through a representative of the Mayor's Neighborhood Business Program, potential applicant contacts the Office of Program Development, Commercial Development Section, 182 Tremont St., 5th floor, and fills out a preliminary application form.

B. Program staff counsels the applicant regarding the proposed project and explains available assistance. At this time the applicant will be advised as to the apparent feasibility of his or her proposal.

C. If the applicant desires loan assistance the program loan packager will screen the applicant, determine his financing needs and advise as to loan prospects. A confidential application for loan assistance will be submitted by the applicant along with business and/or personal financial statements from the previous three years.

D. The applicant submits application for assistance.

E. Design work for the project is completed. For each project, ten hours of free professional design assistance is available. To qualify for these free services, the applicant may choose from among several private architects approved for the program.

The applicant will be financially responsible for any time required by the architect beyond the free 10-hour allotment. Prior to incurring additional costs, however, the architect will notify the applicant and obtain his permission for further work. These additional costs will count towards the Commercial Rehabilitation Rebate.

All design work is subject to approval by Design Review Committee for the Area in which the Project is located, under Design Guidelines in force at the time the application is received by the Office of Program Development.

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